

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 274 115

EC 190 288

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TITLE A Guide for Parents of College-Bound Learning Disabled High School Students. Long Island University Transition Project Learning How to Learn: A High School/College Linkage Model to Expand Higher Education Opportunities for Learning Disabled Students. Position Paper Series: Document No. 7. Draft.
INSTITUTION Long Island Univ., Brooklyn, NY.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Apr 86
NOTE 18p.; For related documents, see EC 190 285-287.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reference Materials - Directories/Catalogs (132)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Bound Students; *College Choice; *College Preparation; *Decision Making; Higher Education; High Schools; High School Students; *Learning Disabilities; *Parent Participation; Parent Role

ABSTRACT

With the increased emphasis on making college programs available for learning disabled students, parents should participate with their children in the investigation of colleges that offer the facilities and support systems which will enable the learning disabled (LD) candidate to achieve success in college. This guide provides a framework to help parents and students go through the college selection process. Following an introduction, a section on "Understanding the LD Student" discusses academic performance levels and social development levels of learning disabled students. The sections called "Criteria for College Selection for LD Students" and "Checklist of College LD Resources and Services" both consider such criteria as campus visits, teacher recommendations, special support services, facilities, and alternatives for learning disabled students. The fifth section, "Factors in Selection of a Suitable College," considers location, level of competitiveness, programs of study, size, cost, campus life, affiliation, and special features. Following this, a "Calendar for College Planning and Selection," starting from the student's high school freshman year and running through the high school senior year, is presented. In the last two sections, eight directories of colleges for special needs students are referenced and a user's evaluation form for the parent's guide is provided. (CB)

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A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF COLLEGE-BOUND
LEARNING DISABLED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Learning How to Learn: A High School/College Linkage Model
To Expand Higher Educational Opportunities for Learning Disabled Students

This publication was prepared with funding support
from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U. S. Department of Education

Position Paper Series:
Document No. 7
April, 1986

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. UNDERSTANDING THE LD STUDENT	2
III. CRITERIA FOR COLLEGE SELECTION FOR THE LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT	4
IV. CHECKLIST FOR LD SERVICES	5
V. FACTORS IN SELECTION OF A SUITABLE COLLEGE	7
VI. CALENDAR FOR COLLEGE PLANNING AND SELECTION	9
VII. COLLEGE GUIDES FOR LD STUDENTS	12
VIII. USER'S EVALUATION OF THE PARENT GUIDE	14

I. Introduction

An increasing number of two and four year colleges and universities throughout the United States are accepting qualified learning disabled students. Comprehensive programs provide flexible procedures for admitting learning disabled students. Staff members are trained in learning disabilities and provide a range of support services designed for LD students. Often there is a Learning Center on campus with direct liaison with faculty.

Generally support services are available at no or low cost to the students. Services, aides and devices for personal use and study -- such as individualized tutoring, extensive counseling, diagnostic-prescriptive testing -- are often provided on a fee basis.

With the increased emphasis on making college programs available for LD students, parents should participate with their children in the investigation of colleges that offer the facilities and support systems which will enable the learning disabled candidate to achieve success in college. This "Guide for Parents of College-Bound Learning Disabled High School Students: provides a framework for the college selection process.

II. Understanding the LD Student

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Reviewing and understanding the student's levels of academic performance in high school course work as well as standardized tests will help both the parent and the student decide on the appropriateness of the different post-secondary programs. Generally, two or four year institutions of higher education require students: 1) to read college level text books or listen to taped texts; 2) to comprehend the material presented; and 3) to be able to integrate and express ideas in written form.

The student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) contains testing and school performance levels. Consult the student's special education teachers, guidance counselor and school psychologist for educational information. Have the guidance department at the student's high school assess his or her interest and aptitude to provide direction for career choices and post-secondary education.

Most of all, be realistic as to the goals that are set by systematically exploring available post-secondary education and career options.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT LEVELS

Attending a post-secondary educational program, even with specific supports provided by the institution of higher learning, requires that the student possess the maturity and social judgment necessary to be successful in more independent environments.

Motivation to attend college should begin with the student. As a parent, you need to assess his or her ability to act independently. For example, does the student make independent decisions? Can he or she negotiate transportation facilities (i.e., If planning to attend a metropolitan college, has the student frequently traveled alone in the city?); attend to personal needs;

plan his or her use of money with ease? To what extent has the student developed appropriate behaviors and social skills in interaction with peers and adults? Together, the parent and student need to explore the demands of the college environment and the supports available for fostering effective social functioning.

Finding their own identity and direction is a persistent concern, particularly for those who feel different or are unable to readily achieve independence and self-reliance. LD adolescents may continue to need many of the same resources they have had all through life in school and with the family. Knowing the student and his or her needs will be of great assistance in selecting the type of post-secondary experience that is most suitable.

Appropriate educational and social development information should be shared with the college or university if the need for additional support services are anticipated. Honest and open communication within the family structure between student and parents will be most helpful in the total college selection process. Special testing and assistance may be available through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) and other local agencies that provide services for learning disabled youth and young adults.

III. Criteria for College Selection for LD Students

Although special programs for learning disabled students are now appearing on many college campuses, serious study and investigation is necessary for a successful union of students' needs and colleges' offerings.

After initial analysis of admissions criteria, one must also consider the special opportunities available on campus to the learning disabled student. Finally, a visit to the campus enables the student to be certain of these opportunities and facilities and the student can also ascertain the general campus atmosphere.

The selection process is a research project in which study and analysis are required. The admissions procedure itself must be investigated and the actual physical setting for any special programs provided by the college must be seen. Then, students are ready to apply to the colleges whose offerings seem to coincide with their needs.

Most learning disabilities' programs require a letter from the student's special education teacher or guidance counselor stating the nature of the disability as well as the results of a recent intelligence and other testing. If SAT's are required, untimed SAT's are often accepted.

Students should ask the college about special support services and actual facilities available. Are there counselors, advocates, educators, tutors, readers and note-takers available? Are there alternatives available, such as: reduced course load, substitutions for required courses, remediation courses, taped classes, study skills training, individualized instruction, special registration procedures, available word processors. Finally, what is the college atmosphere for the learning disabled student? After serious investigation of the colleges' offerings, students can feel comfortable about their applications to those colleges satisfying their individual needs.

IV. Checklist of College LD Resources and Services

Admissions requirements:

Special testing? _____

Untimed SAT? _____

I. Q. Test? _____

Special services available:

Number of full-time LD specialists? _____

Assignment of faculty advisor? _____

Provision for special procedures for study? _____

for testing ? _____

Method of articulation of program with professors? _____

Career counseling? _____

Resource center: convenient ? _____

comfortable ? _____

Number of hours of tutoring by specialists
per week ? _____

Extra fees for support services? _____

College atmosphere:

Number of learning disabled students on
campus ? _____

full-time ? _____

part-time ? _____

Average age? _____

Housing differentiation? _____

How are professors and counselors informed of
students' needs ? _____

Are the following alternatives available:

- . reduced course load? _____
 - . substitutions for required courses? _____
 - . remediation classes? _____
 - . recorded lectures? _____
 - . alternative admission procedures _____
-

V. Factors in Selection of a Suitable College

There are certain considerations common to all students in selecting a college. Students and parents need to discuss these ideas with family, friends, teachers and counselors.

Location -

Location includes the section of the country, the setting, distance from home, distance from a cultural center, and your residential plans - on campus, near campus, at home.

Level of competitiveness -

While it is considered wise to reach for the highest level in choosing a college, the most competitive and high pressured is not always the best for your child.

Programs of study -

Select a school with a strong curriculum in areas of interest. If a student is undecided, he/she should choose a college with a variety of majors which may match academic and personal strengths.

Size -

The size of the undergraduate population from under 1000 students to tens of thousands creates vastly different educational and social environments. It is important to visit colleges of various sizes in order to assess your adjustment to size as well as the location.

Cost -

College costs vary greatly; therefore a serious consideration of the family's financial situation and the level of eligibility for financial assistance is important.

Campus Life -

Campus atmosphere, activities, and student facilities are important considerations since most time in college is spent outside of class.

Affiliation -

Some colleges are public while some are private. Some private colleges have strong religious affiliation while others are affiliated. Religious affiliations are often loose and not reflected in student body composition. Public schools are tax supported and consequently, have lower tuition and no affiliations.

Special Features -

Special considerations such as quality of library, housing arrangements, co-operative work study, study abroad, honors programs, fraternities and sororities, and cultural events are also important items to explore.

VI. Calendar for College Planning & Selection

Freshman Year:

- . Plan a college preparatory program of study
- . Consider career options

Sophomore Year

- . Explore interests, values and decision-making strategies
- . Identify sources of college information
- . Develop a tentative list of post-secondary schools
- . Research and characterize academic and social competencies needed by student for success in a college setting
- . Re-evaluate and adjust course of study

Junior Year

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Identify additional sources of college information . Meet with counselor or college advisor . Obtain a Social Security number |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Register for PSAT/NMSQT . #RD Saturday in October take PSAT/NMSQT |
| November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Review available sources of information on colleges with support programs for learning disabled students |
| December | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Review results of PSAT/NMSQT. Use information to interpret your scores. . Discuss special testing with counselor. Make preliminary arrangements for untimed or extended time SAT. |

January

February . Discuss college at home and review financial as well as other considerations of importance

March . Meet with counselor and finalize the list of schools to research and visit

. Finalize arrangements for special testing and/or sign up for regular SAT

April . Write for information and application. Call and arrange visits.

. Sign up for achievement tests in subjects of special strengths if required by colleges under consideration

May . Read, interview, use college computer search, and all other sources to gather as much information as possible

June . Plan for summer - college visits, SAT preparation, essay writing for college applications

. Take Resources Checklist on visits and carefully review programs

Senior Year:

September . Reduce college list, review and begin preparing applications

. Create a checklist of application deadlines. Submit applications to counselor at least two to three weeks in advance

. Sign up for SAT

October . Write essays

. Decide when to ask for recommendations and do so (Submit addressed and stamped envelope with forms)

- November . Complete all early decision responses before deadline
- . File early Financial Aid Forms (FAF)
- December . Complete financial aid applications and college's own financial aid applications to be mailed in January with tax information.
- . Continue submitting applications with forms to counselors two weeks in advance
- January Mail FAF
- March . Rank your college choices once acceptances begin to arrive
- . Visit again and review resources with an educated approach to resolve doubts.
- April . Once acceptances arrive, choose school and pay deposit
- May . Assess finances including aid package, if awarded, and plan how to pay college expenses

BOSC Directory for Facilities for Learning Disabled

Information: List of postsecondary programs and agencies serving learning disabled students
Cost: \$20.00 plus \$2.00 for shipping
Address: BOSC
Dept. F, Box 305
Congers, New York 10920

Colleges/Universities That Accept Students with Learning Disabilities

Information: List of colleges by states
Cost: \$3.00 (prepaid)
Address: ACALD
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15234
Phone: (412) 341-1515

Directory of College Facilities and Services for the Disabled

Information: List of facilities, services, aids, number of students and contact persons
Cost: \$95.00
Address: Oryx Oress
2214 North Central at Encanto
Phoenix, Az. 85004-1483

A Guide to Postsecondary Educational Opportunities for the Learning Disabled

Information: List of colleges by programs and special services
Cost: \$12.00
Address: Time Out to Enjoy
715 Lake Street,
Suite 100
Oak Park, Il 60301

Lovejoy's College Guide for the Learning Disabled

Information: Lists of colleges by states. Annotations include admissions requirements, support services and academic requirements.
Cost: \$10.95
Address: Simon & Schuster Publishers
Attention Order Department
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, N.Y. 10020

A National Directory of Four Year Colleges, Two Year Colleges and Post High School Training Programs for Young People with Learning Disabilities

Information: List of colleges and universities by states. Also includes non-college programs.
Cost: \$15.95 (plus \$1.00 for postage)
Address: Partners in Publishing
Box 50347
Tulsa, Ok. 74150
Phone: (918) 584-5906

Peterson's Guide to College with Programs for Learning Disabled Students

Information: List of 250 colleges and universities. Page size information for quick reference.

Cost: \$13.95 (plus \$2.00 for postage)

Address: Peterson's Guide Department

5710, 166 Bunn Drive

P. O. Box 2123

Princeton, NJ 08540-0008

The FCLD Learning Disabilities Resources Guides: A State by State Directory of Special Programs, Schools, and Services

Information: Quick reference guide lists colleges and universities by state.

Cost: \$5.00

Address: Foundation for Children with Learning Disabilities

Box 2929

Grand Central Station

New York, N.Y. 10163

VIII. User's Evaluation of the Parent Guide

In order to improve the parent guide, so that it can be of the most help to you, we need to know your opinion. After reviewing the guide, please complete this brief questionnaire by circling the response which best describes your opinion. Separate the survey from the booklet, fold and mail.

1. How satisfied were you with the overall contents?

very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied

2. How satisfied were you with the completeness of the coverage of the guide?

very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied

3. How satisfied were you with the information about the college-bound LD student?

very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied

4. How satisfied were you with the college resource checklist?

very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied

5. How satisfied were you with the calendar of activities?

very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied

6. How satisfied were you with the information provided in the references?

very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied

7. How would you rate the ease of use of the guide?

very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied

8. How would you rate how well the guide can serve your purpose?

very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied

Comments and recommendations: _____

Thank you for helping with the evaluation of this material. Please include your return address if you would like to receive a revised guide.

fold here

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fold here
